John Bourchier, better known as Lord Berners (c. 1467—1533), was the author of The Castell of Love, the first translation into English of Diego de San Pedro’s Cárcel de amor (1492), a highly successful Spanish sentimental romance. Although translated in the late 1520s, the first printed editions of The Castell did not appear until 1548, 1552, and c. 1555 (STC 21739.5 — 21740 — 21742). The translation into English was made from one of the six Spanish editions of the Cárcel printed between 1511 and 1526, as well as either the 1526, the 1527 or the 1528 edition of François d’Assy’s Prison d’Amour, the French translation of the text done from the 1514 Italian version, Carcer damore by Lelio Manfredi of Ferrara. The Castell was far from being Lord Berners’s first translation, for by then he had already completed three of his five renowned works: the romance The History of the moost noble and valyaunt knight, Arthur of Lytell Brytayne, translated from the French Artus de la Petite Bretagne, and printed in 1560 (STC 807) and 1582; the Huon of Burdeux, another romance from the French, first printed around 1515 (STC 13998.5), then probably in 1545–61 and 1570, and with all likelihood in 1601 (STC 13999); and, at the suggestion of Henry VIII, Froissart’s Chronycles, the first volume of which was printed three times — in 1523, 1542, and c. 1563 (STC 11396 — 11396.5 — 11396.7) — and the second, twice, first in 1525, and again in 1563 (STC 11397 — 11397a). It was after Berners translated The Castell in the late 1520s that he engaged in his last translation, which he finished just one year before his death, The Golden Boke of Marcus Aurelius Emperour and Eloquent Oratour, which was a rendering into English of Antonio de Guevara’s Libro áureo de Marco Aurelio. Berners’s translation was so successful that from its first edition in 1535 (STC 12436.5) it was reissued fifteen times before 1586 (STC 12447). The fact that Berners translated from the French and Spanish was not fortuitous, for his position as a statesman made him travel to the two countries. In 1518 Berners and John Kite, archbishop of Armagh, were assigned a special mission in Spain to form an alliance between Charles I of Spain and Henry VIII. Then, in December 1520 Berners moved to Calais to become deputy of the city in which, thirteen years later, he would die and be buried. During his time there, Berners devoted many of his leisure hours to his famous literary translations.

The Castell did not constitute the first rendering into English of a work by Diego de San Pedro. Five years before the first publication of The Castell, San Pedro’s first sentimental romance, Tractado de amores de Arnalte y Lucenda (1491), often considered a preliminary sketch for the Cárcel, had been published in the English translation of John Clerk under the title of A certain treaty most wytely deuyesd orygynally wrytten in the spaynyssh, lately Traducid in to French entytled, Lamant mal traicte de samye (STC 546). Later in the century readers could find a second translation by Claudius Hollyband from the Italian version of Arnalte y Lucenda, which would see two editions carrying two different titles. These were the 1575 (STC 6758) bilingual edition, later reprinted in 1591 and entitled The Pretie and wittie Historie of Arnalt & Lucenda: with certen Rules and Dialogues set fowrth for the leaner of th’Italian tong; and the 1583 edition reprinted in
The lifespan of the sentimental romance is usually considered to run from 1440 to 1550 and it is divided into three different periods. The first period runs from 1440 to 1460, beginning with the publication of Juan Rodriguez del Padrón’s *Siervo libre de amor* (c. 1440), and it includes the Sátira de felic e infelice vida (c. 1453) by Pedro de Portugal. The second period (1461–1492) is considered the Golden Age of this type of fiction, when more topics are explored, the technique becomes more refined, and the forms more complex. It encompasses Diego de San Pedro’s *Arnalte y Lucenda* and the Cárcel, along with Juan de Flores’s *Historia de Grisél y Mirabella con la disputa de Torrellas y Braçaida* (c. 1480) and *Breve tractado de Grimalte y Gradiissa* (c. 1485). The third and final period (1493–1550) groups the works that belong to the late development of the genre, such as Juan de Segura’s *Processo de cartas de amores* (1548) and Quexa y aviso contra Amor (1548), and integrates many of the translations of the major works. The scholars who claim the sentimental romance as an independent literary genre recognise the Cárcel as its central work and the landmark for all future sentimental romances. In fact, the Cárcel reflects the various influences that have shaped the genre: Ovid’s *Heroides*, Italian fiction in general and, more specifically, Boccaccio’s *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta*, or chivalric romances. The latter have in common with the sentimental romance an idealised chivalric setting, protagonists of noble origins, and the presence in the story of battles, sieges, and duels. In comparison with chivalric fiction, sentimental romances are shorter and give more relevance to the interior action and thoughts of the characters, and make a more abundant use of letters and poems. In terms of plot, they usually deal with a frustrated love story which often leads to the death of one of the protagonists. The servitude of the suitor, the cruelty of the lady, and the mutability of fortune are some of their central *topoi*, all of it seasoned with abundant allegories. As will be presently seen, the story developed in *The Castell* displays all these features.

The action of *The Castell* begins in Sierra Morena when the narrator, ‘the Auctor’, who is on his way home after participating in war, is stunned by a perplexing sight: a ‘fierce and furious’ knight carrying a shield of steel in one hand, and, in the other, a beautiful stone image of a woman (sig. A3v). The disconcerting knight is followed by a miserable prisoner, who bids the ‘Auctor’ to help him. After much dubitation, the ‘Auctor’ resolves to follow him. The knight then identifies himself as ‘Desire’, ‘principal officer in the house of the god of love’ (sig. B1v), and the prisoner as Lereano, son to the duke Guerro and the duchess Colerea, from the kingdom of Macedonia. The three eventually arrive at the Castle of Love, described with great detail by means of allegory. In that setting, Lereano confesses that the reason for his dramatic situation is his love for Laureola, daughter to the king Guallo of Macedonia. Out of pity, the ‘Auctor’ agrees to go to Court to inform Laureola of Lereano’s plight, to which Laureola responds with cold disdain. The following scholars consider the sentimental romance as an independent genre: Dinko Cvitanovic, *La novela sentimental española* (Madrid: Prensa Española, 1973); Alan Deyermond ‘The Lost Genre of Medieval Spanish Literature’, *Hispanic Review* 43 (1975), 231–59; Gili Gaya (1976); Aybar Ramirez (1994); Joseph J. Gwara and E. Michael Gerli (eds.), *Studies on Spanish Sentimental Romance, 1440–1550: Defining a Genre* (London: Tamesis Books, 1997); Regula Rohland of Langbehn (2001); Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo (2008).
'Auctor' suggests Lereano write a letter to Laureola, which sets in motion an epistolary exchange mediated by the 'Auctor'. 15

Then, Persio, son to another lord of the country, discovers that Lereano and Laureola are corresponding with each other, and imagines secret meetings are taking place between the two. He reports his suspicions as facts to Laureola’s father, the king, who believes what he is told and immediately imprisons Laureola and declares Lereano a traitor. After a duel between Lereano and Persio, which concludes with Lereano cutting off Persio’s right hand, further intrigues on the part of Persio follow. He bribes three men to testify to having witnessed Laureola and Lereano’s encounters. As a consequence, Laureola is sentenced to death by her own father, Lereano’s men kill Persio, and they fight against the king’s army to set Laureola free. This done, she is sent with her uncle Galileo, her mother’s brother, to a castle of his where she can be safe. The fight between Lereano and the king continues until Lereano’s men capture one of the false witnesses and he confesses the truth. Thereupon, the king removes all charges against Laureola and Lereano.

Despite this happy turn of events, Laureola still refuses to see Lereano or write to him: she declares her gratitude, but she proves to be profoundly concerned about her honour. The news makes Lereano fall seriously ill, confining him to bed and making him commit a sort of passive suicide by refusing to eat or drink. His friend Tefeo visits him and tries to comfort him by listing the faults and vices traditionally associated with women. Upon hearing this, Lereano makes a speech ‘agaynst all evell spekers agaynst women’ (sig. K6v), giving fifteen arguments why Tefeo is wrong, another twenty why ‘men are bound to love women’ (sig. L2f), and illustrating his points with examples from the lives of virtuous women. 16 Shortly before dying, and in order not to compromise Laureola’s honour, Lereano tears her letters into pieces, and puts them in a cup of water which he then drinks. With great grief, the ‘Auctor’ returns to his own country and writes down the story.

Strictly speaking, this would be the plot of The Castell if Berners’s work were solely the translation of Diego de San Pedro’s Cárcel. However, Lord Berners also rendered into English Nicolás Núñez’s continuation to the original story. Nicolás Núñez was a poet who felt dissatisfied enough with the way the Cárcel ended as to write a continuation to it that would give an account of Laureola’s true feelings towards Lereano. 17 Núñez’s continuation of the story was first published in the form of an appendix to the second edition of Cárcel de amor, published in Burgos in 1496 by Fabrique Alemán de Basilea. Thereafter, and with very few exceptions, both works would be published together. Curiously enough, Berners’s Castell does include the continuation by Núñez even though Assy’s French translation, which Berners had at hand while translating, dispensed with it. This explains why the part of the Castell that corresponds to the translation of Núñez’s continuation is unanimously considered to have been solely carried out from the Spanish original. 18 In it the spirit of the dead Lereano appears in a dream before the ‘Auctor’, and there is a dialogue between the ‘Auctor’ and Laureola where she openly admits being deeply in love with Lereano, and is hence greatly distressed by his death. This of course contrasts with the Laureola in San Pedro’s work, whose feelings for Lereano were left uncertain. As a consequence the interpretation and the perception of the characters change radically. Firstly, Lereano’s death becomes even more tragic knowing that he did die thinking that Laureola was indifferent to him and that he was not loved back, when he actually was. Secondly, Núñez’s addition turns Laureola into a tragic character torn by the dilemma of overtly manifesting her love for Lereano and avoiding his death, or silencing her true feelings to preserve her honour.

San Pedro’, Bulletin Hispanique 54 (1953), 245–75 (p. 266). Keith Whinnom (‘Introducción crítica’, in Obras completas de Diego de San Pedro, 3 vols (Madrid: Castalia, 1971–73), vol 2: Cárcel de Amor (1972), 38–39) points out that, although suicide was a capital sin, the Church did not seem to take it very seriously in the fifteenth century, and that San Pedro even includes in his list of virtuous women in history a number of suicides.

27. B. Wardroper (1953).
34. Note that there is a considerable difference between the Spanish term ‘fe’ (‘faith’), and the word by which Berners chooses to render it into English: ‘hope’ (‘esperanza’, in Spanish). While ‘fe’ is a key concept in the semantic field of religion, ‘hope’ is rather a state of mind that can be related to both sacred as well as secular matters. As a consequence, the use of ‘hope’ in this context makes the sentence sound less heretical than its Spanish original.
36. Ibid., p. 95.
39. In 1529, it appeared in the first edition of Richard Hyrd’s translation into English of Vives’s work, A very frutefull and pleasant boke called the Instruction of a Christen woman (STC 24856.5).
and seeing him die.

There is a remarkable difference around the issue of Lereano’s death between Berner’s version and the Spanish original. While the former presents Lereano’s death as a natural death caused by grief, the latter rather describes it as a suicide. This means that Berners replaces sentences such as ‘como por la corte y todo el reino se publicase que Leriano se dexava morir’ (‘as in the court and in all the realm it was published that Leriano was letting himself die’), with ‘it was publyshed abroad in the realme, and in the courte how Lereano was lyke to dye’ (sig. K6f). The fact that this is a deliberate alteration in Berner’s translation invites us to explore the reasons that may have led him to it.

Suicide is far from being an unexpected element in sentimental romances. The happy ending is typically absent, and death is a constant in the genre. In El triunfo de las donas (c. 1440), by Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, Aliso kills himself for feeling spurned; in El siervo libre de amor, by the same author, Ardanlier used his own sword to commit suicide after Liessa’s death; in Juan de Flores’s Grisel y Mirabella, Grisel jumps into the flames in place of Mirabella, who is prevented from following him, and who, out of despair, throws herself out of a window and is then devoured by lions; in Queixa y aviso contra Amor, by Juan de Segura, Lucindaro starves to death after swallowing her beloved’s ashes; and Grimalte y Gradissa, by Juan de Flores, ends with a vision of hell in which Grimalte, rejected by Gradissa, witnesses the tormenting sufferings undergone by Boccaccio’s Panfilo and Fiammetta, after the latter also committed suicide. It has been pointed out that suicide is perceived in most of these cases with apparent approval as a demonstration of the lover’s true and noble feelings. But what is the exact meaning of suicide in the case of the Cárcel? What are the reasons that stand behind Lereano’s actual behaviour? And why would Berners want to eliminate any explicit reference to suicide?

To fully understand the peculiar behaviour of Lereano, it is necessary to take into account, first of all, the resemblance between the male protagonists of San Pedro’s romances and the main character of the chivalric romance Amadis de Gaula (1508), who changes his name to ‘Beltenebros’ (‘Prince of shadows’) and isolates himself in ‘Peña Pobre’ (‘Poor Rock’) after a chastising letter from his lady Oriana. Lereano similarly cuts himself off from the world in an allegorical prison, transformed into a castle in Berner’s English translation. Lereano’s attitude has also been explained as a series of attempts to achieve perfection as a lover, a knight, a warrior, and a Christian, which would tinge the inscription of the lady on a level with God by attributing to her powers similar to that of religion, and the love for her a faith. That is why at the beginning of the romance, ‘religion of love’, in which the figure of the lady enjoys a quasi-divine status. As a result, the lady becomes a goddess, the incipient relationship of one of the protagonists, or take place between members of different social classes. Love becomes, in itself, enough of a reason to turn to secrecy and concealment for fear of either the loss of honour or of life. Indeed, it seems as if, in Spanish sentimental romances, love is a scandal in itself, even if that love is not part of an incestuous relationship, does not imply adultery, does not threaten another in the codes of these four spheres clash, which results in an insurmountable conflict that ends tragically. His decision to let himself die has been interpreted as the final proof of the perfection of his love for Laureola, and the act of drinking her letters before dying as a strategy for the destruction of documents that may compromise her honour. This relates to Diego de San Pedro’s Sermón ordenado, which was written around 1485, and which lists the precepts of courtly love that underlie his romances. In the Sermón, San Pedro suggests that the lady should be merciful, and that her suitor should keep his love for her secret, seek the relief of solitude when in pain, and resist the anguish of not being corresponded with. In this respect, San Pedro states the following:

paresce que todo amador deue antes perder la vida que escurecer la fama de la que siruiere, auiendo por mejor receibir la muerte callando su pena, que merecerla trayendo su cuydadado a publicación.

[It seems that every lover should rather lose his life than blemish the reputation of the one he serves, choosing to receive death by silencing his sorrows, rather than to deserve it by making his care public.]

In other words, the lady’s good name and respectability are above everything, even her suitor’s life, for death is preferred before damaging the lady’s honour. Indeed, it seems as if, in Spanish sentimental romances, love is a scandal in itself, even if that love is not part of an incestuous relationship, does not imply adultery, does not threaten another incipient relationship of one of the protagonists, or take place between members of different social classes. Love becomes, in itself, enough of a reason to turn to secrecy and concealment for fear of either the loss of honour or of life. In fact, following the literary convention of the amant martyr of the fifteenth century, Lereano has been taken as a ‘martyr of love’. The term ‘martyr’ retains in this context its religious sense, and so Lereano becomes a follower of the religion of love, in which the figure of the lady enjoys a quasi-divine status. As a result, the lady becomes a goddess, the lexical field used to refer to her that of religion, and the love for her a faith. That is why at the beginning of the romance, when Lereano is taken prisoner by Desire, he keeps on repeating ‘En mi fe se sufre todo’ (‘In my faith all is suffered’), which Berners translates as ‘by reason of my hope, I suffre all this’ (sig. A4f). Similarly, when at the end of the story the ‘Auctor’ comments upon Lereano’s death, he does it in the following terms: ‘y assí quedó su muerte en testimonio de su fe’ (‘and so his death remained as a testimony of his faith’), rendered into English by Berners as ‘and therwith gave up his lyfe in witnes of his true fayth’ (sig. M2v). A final instance drawn from a conversation between the ‘Auctor’ and Laureola illustrates how the Castell seems to put the lady on a level with God by attributing to her powers similar to
those of a deity:

Mira en qué cargo eres a Leriano, que aun su passión te haze servicio, pues si la remedias te da causa que puedas hazer lo mismo que Dios; porque no es de menos estima el redemir quel criar, assí que harás tú tanto en quitalle la muerte como Dios en darle la vida.\textsuperscript{36}

[Look in what debt you are to Lereano, that his passion still serves you; for if you remedy it, that will give you the chance to do the same as God, because it is of no less importance to redeem than to raise, so you will do as much in taking death from him as God in giving him life.]

This is translated by Berners in the following terms:

Consyder how moch ye be bound to hym, and for al his passion and adversite, yet he doth serve you, and if ye remedy him, then he is the occasion to cause you to do as much as god maye do, for it is of no lesse esteme, the redemer, then is the creator: for in takynge fro hym the deth, ye shall do as moche, as god to gyve him lyfe. (sig. C3r–C3v)

These expressions, which border on blasphemy, were no doubt responsible for the fact that San Pedro’s book appeared in the Inquisitional Index in 1632.\textsuperscript{37}

The question of why Berners omitted the references to Lereano’s suicide remains, nonetheless, unanswered. One possibility is that, since he was conscious that The Castell would be mainly read by women, he felt it his duty to avoid the topic as part of a didactic or moralising programme. After all, suicide was a cardinal sin, and the translation of The Castell a request of his niece Lady Elizabeth Carew. Both in England and Spain, women were taken as the target readership of sentimental romances, and some concern was felt regarding what female audiences read.\textsuperscript{38} Juan Luis Vives’s \textit{De institutione foeminae christianae} (1523; \textit{STC} 24861) constitutes a good example of that anxiety.\textsuperscript{39} The work was dedicated to Catherine of Aragon and written for the instruction of her daughter Princess Mary. In it Vives condemns the reading of romances by women, and in the chapter ‘What bokes to be redde, and what not’ he lists a number of Spanish works unsuitable for the female audience. Among them, there are titles such as \textit{Amadis}, \textit{Tirant lo Blanc}, Fernando de Rojas’s \textit{La tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea} – and San Pedro’s \textit{Cárcel de amor}. Since Vives’s work was published some years before Berners actually undertook the translation of the Castell, it would not be surprising if Berners had been aware of Vives’s ideas. If the deletion of suicide in the Castell had actually had something to do with Vives’s remarks, Berners’s translation would not have been the first one to be modified in that direction: the first rendering into English of Rojas’s \textit{Celestina}, done by John Rastell and published in 1525 (\textit{STC} 20721), underwent so many changes in the process of its translation that it did not just do away with Melibea’s suicide and the work’s distinctive bawdiness, but actually became a moralising title aimed at the instruction of women.\textsuperscript{40}

In any case, this omission did not prevent The Castell of Love either from constituting an excellent instance of Berners’s abilities as a translator, or from becoming a success in sixteenth-century England. Likewise, the complaints of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spanish moralists, together with the subsequent banning of the Inquisition, were unable to stem the countless editions and translations of San Pedro’s sentimental romance \textit{Cárcel de amor}.

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